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C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 002825

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NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE AND IPA; NSC FOR ABRAMS/DORAN/LOGGERFO

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [CASC](#) [KPAL](#) [KWBG](#) [PHUM](#)  
SUBJECT: MGGZ01 - ISRAELI GAZA INCURSION - JERUSALEM JULY 6  
SITREP

Classified By: Consul General Jake Waller. Reasons: 1.4 (b) and (d).

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Summary  
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1. (C) IDF forces on July 6 expanded their incursion in the northern Gaza to the three dismantled settlements that had been the site of previous Qassam rocket launches. The Israeli move follows the launching of two additional Qassam rockets, one of which came near the southern city of Ashkelon. A senior Hamas official was executed in northern Gaza in what appears to be intra-Palestinian violence. Israeli security sources report a number of intended suicide bombers. Press reports indicate the captors of kidnapped IDF corporal Galid Shalit have apparently lowered their demands to an agreement for prisoners to be released in the future. Close to 150 American citizens in Gaza have requested assistance in departing; Post is working to secure their exit. The Karni goods crossing was closed on July 5, but was reported open for several hours on July 6. Fuel transfers via Nahal Oz have been halted on July 5 and 6, and certain types of fuel are running low. Battle damage around Rafah and Erez has affected electricity transmission; about 90 percent of Rafah is reported to be without power.

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Military Developments  
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2. (C) Israeli press reports indicate that a "large contingent of IDF infantry and armor units" moved into the three former Israeli settlements of Nisanit, Eli Snai, and Dugit on July 6, following the launching of two additional Qassam rockets on July 5, one to the southern Israeli city of Ashkelon and one toward Erez. The military wing of Hamas claimed responsibility for both launches. IDF spokesmen and Israeli political leaders told the press that the latest Israeli action is a limited incursion, intended to build pressure for the release of kidnapped IDF corporal Galid Shalit as well as to help prevent the firing of additional rockets.

3. (C) Comment: The latest Israeli incursion is up to km deep in some sections, according to Israeli government radio -- coming up to, but not entering, Palestinian population centers. The buffer zone thus created should have the effect of pushing Qassam rocket launchers deeper into Palestinian territory, and thereby decreasing the amount of Israeli territory these relatively short-range rockets can hit. However, the mission of the prevention of rocket firing is militarily open-ended, and Israeli press accounts describe the new contingent of troops as preparing for "a relatively extended stay." End Comment.

4. (C) A senior Hamas official, Hussein Abu Ajwa, was killed while driving his car in northern Gaza late on July 5. This attack appears to be intra-Palestinian violence, and PA security sources told political specialist that a group of gunmen stopped Abu Ajwa and executed him. No group has taken responsibility for the attack; however, Hamas reportedly suspects Fatah involvement. In other Palestinian-Palestinian violence, Hamas gunmen reportedly opened fire on two al-Jazeera and Ramattan news agency personnel driving a car near Beit Hanoun. The gunmen apparently mistook the reporters for IDF under cover soldiers.

5. (C) The IAF carried out at least three raids in Gaza, striking a training facility of the Abu Al Rish brigades as well as three roads in the central Gaza strip. In the West Bank, IDF raids and arrest directed at Hamas offices and personnel continue.

6. (C) Israeli security sources report a number of intended suicide bombers; the latest was of a 20-year old from Jenin, who was apparently destined for an industrial zone in the Ariel settlement in the West Bank. The Hamas military wing

released a statement on July 5 threatening attacks in Tel Aviv if Palestinian casualties in Gaza continue.

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Political Developments  
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17. (C) Media reports and PA officials talking to political specialist indicate that the captors of Shalit have lowered their demands from large numbers of prisoners to be released immediately to a number of prisoners to be released "at a

later stage" provided that mediators can provide the necessary guarantees.

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AMCIT Update  
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18. (C) Close to 150 American citizens are now requesting assistance in leaving Gaza. There are reports of both the Erez and Rafah border crossings opening for short periods of time, and Post is working with Israeli and Palestinian officials to find ways for Americans to depart. Some U.S. press and citizens of other countries have apparently been able to depart via the Erez crossing in the north; however, all those who were able to depart appear to have already had Israeli travel credentials, which is not the case of the other American citizens in question.

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Humanitarian Update  
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19. (SBU) According to PalTrade in Gaza, the Karni/al-Mintar crossing was closed July 5 and re-opened for operations at 9:30 am, July 6. As of 11:30 am local time, 28 truckloads had passed through the crossing, including the following goods:

- one truckload of wheat;
- one truckload of flour;
- two truckloads of sugar;
- one truckload of cooking oil;
- three truckloads of dairy and frozen products;
- five truckloads of animal feed;
- four truckloads of fruits and vegetables;
- seven truckloads of processed foods and other goods;
- three truckloads of medical tools; and
- one truckload of packed cement.

Karni was closed at 13:45 local time, July 6, after 100 truckloads had transited the crossing into Gaza. Palestinian staff at the crossing did not expect the crossing to reopen July 6. In addition to the basic commodities, dairy products, fruits and vegetables, and animal feed that transited the crossing, 35,000 liters of diesel for UNRWA's Gaza operations also transited. (Note: UNRWA's fuel shipments are delivered through the Karni/al-Mintar crossing, not through the Nahal Oz fuel transfer station. End note.)

110. (SBU) The Nahal Oz fuel transfer station was closed July 15. According to USAID Gaza-based staff conversations with Gaza gas station owners, Nahal Oz remains closed July 6. The 1.8 million liters of diesel fuel imported July 2-4 are expected to run out July 6 since average daily consumption is 400,000 liters. The 533 tons of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) or cooking gas imported July 2-4 have now sold out, as well, given average daily consumption of 150 tons. Gasoline supplies are expected to last until July 7.

111. (SBU) USAID Gaza-based field staff reported that IDF tank shelling from al-Shuka village east of Rafah hit the medium tension electricity feeder line from Israel to Rafah, causing Rafah to lose all electricity as of 11 am, July 5. (Note: Approximately 10 percent of the Rafah area is connected to the Khan Younis electrical grid and does have power. End note.) Reportedly, IDF forces are not allowing the Palestinian Electric Company into the area to repair the damage and the International Committee for the Red Cross is attempting to coordinate access. In the north, USAID Gaza-based staff reported that a medium tension electrical cable was damaged July 5 in the former Erez Industrial Estate. Since repair crews have not yet been able to make repairs, parts of northern Gaza remain without electricity.

112. (SBU) According to USAID staff, the Rafah municipality has stopped pumping water from its eight wells in order to save diesel to pump sewage. Reportedly, the Coastal Municipalities Water Utility will provide 3,000 liters of diesel July 6 to enable pumping of the water wells. Ten health clinics in Rafah, including four public, two UNRWA, and four NGOs clinics, are without electricity, according to WHO sources. Though all are running on generator power, WHO officials are concerned about running the generators beyond their capacity. Without electricity, the cold chain storage of vaccines and medicines cannot be maintained.

WALLES